



THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • FRIDAY • MARCH 19, 2021 • ₹7.00 • PAGES 32 • LATE CITY EDITION



TOLL BOOTHS TO MAKE WAY FOR GPS-BASED COLLECTION

Physical plazas will be done away with in a year as Centre will use GPS imaging to collect highway levy through FASTag

OLD VEHICLES TO GET FREE FASTag

While new vehicles are FASTag-enabled by the manufacturers, the older ones will get the RFID tags for free from the Centre, said Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari. He said 93% users were paying the levy through the tag ever since it was made mandatory on February 16. Those not complying will face the heat for toll theft and GST evasion, he added

SCRAP THAT PAYS

A voluntary scrappage scheme for personal vehicles from 2024 and heavy commercial vehicles from 2023 promises discounts on new buys. A look



5% Manufacturer discount
4-6% Of ex-showroom price of a new car as scrap value for the older one

100 Scrapping centres to be made operational in the next two years

- A GST cut on new vehicles, whose buyers have scrapped their old cars
- Steep hike in FCs for vehicles that are older than 15 years
- Road tax rebate of up to 25% for personal vehicles and up to 15% for commercial vehicles by states proposed
- Registration fees may be waived for the new vehicle against the scrapping certificate

SCRAP CENTRES MUST
■ Comply with environmental and pollution norms and with all applicable Acts

■ Have adequate parking facility, de-pollution equipment for air, water and sound pollution and adequate facilities for hazardous waste disposal

READ SHARE FOLLOW
newindianexpress.com
facebook.com/theindianexpress
twitter.com/newindianexpress
instagram.com/newindianexpress

35,000

JOBS LIKELY TO BE CREATED DUE TO THE SCRAPAGE POLICY



A medical worker carries swab samples during a Covid-19 testing drive near the Kantiwira Sangolli Rayanna Railway Station in Bengaluru on Thursday | SHIRIRAM UN

State readies to fight second wave, musters all resources

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

AS fresh cases of Covid-19 continue to surge with every passing day, the State Government has shifted gears and is reintroducing measures taken during the peak of the pandemic last year, to prevent a possible second wave and mitigate its impact.

For the next 50 days, doctors, healthcare workers and officials will work in mission mode to take preventive measures as well as to ramp up the vaccination drive.

"If we vaccinate senior citizens and those aged above 45 with comorbidities, we can mitigate the second wave," Health and Medical Education Minister Dr K Sudhakar said on Thursday after taking stock of the situation at a meeting with the heads of government hospitals in Bengaluru. The government has set an ambitious target of vaccinating three lakh people per day.

The Covid War Room, which was started last year, will be reactivated for real-time monitoring of the situation, contact tracing, creating micro-containment zones, earmarking of beds in government hospitals to treat Covid-19 patients, besides reviving the Covid Care Centres (CCC) and roping in private hospitals.

The government has decided to earmark 1,000 beds in government hospitals for treating Covid-19 patients in anticipation of a rise in cases. Officials will hold the first round of discussion with private hospitals in the next two days to reserve beds for Covid-19 patients.

"If the infection spreads further, we will rope in private hospitals to ensure availability of adequate number of beds," he said. The Health Minister said that they are now anticipating a possible second wave and preparing to fight it. "We also have the advantage of vaccines now, which we didn't have last year. People should follow precautions and should not let their guard down," Dr Sudhakar stressed.

CONTINUED ON P3

PREPARING FOR THE SURGE

GOVT HOSPITALS

- BMCRI, Victoria Hospital: 30 increase beds from 160 to 300
- Sir CV Raman General Hospital: 100 of 250 beds for Covid patients
- KC General: 70 general Covid beds + 50 ICU beds
- Govt hospitals in and around B'lu to upgrade capacity
- Govt to take a call on reserving 50% beds in private hospitals

COVID CARE CENTRES

- 3 centres used as CCCs will start by this weekend
- Each centre to have a minimum of 100 beds
- BBMP has finalised HAL's Command and Control Centre, National Games Village and Haj Bhavan
- BBMP to deploy staff at CCCs
- Health, zonal officers to ensure facilities are in place
- More CCCs may be opened if required, but not at BIEC

PM's nationalism pitch targets Didi

Modi recalls Mamata's critical take on Army during Pulwama blast in J&K in 2019 and the Balakot counterattack; slams her for calling 2008 Batla House shootout a fake encounter

PRONAB MONDAL @ Kolkata

REVIVING the BJP's nationalism plank, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday cited the Pulwama terror attack in J&K and the subsequent airstrike deep inside Pakistan's Balakot to put West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on the back foot for criticising the Army earlier.

Modi also recalled Mamata pitching the Batla House shootout in 2008 as a fake encounter, a narrative that was negated by a Delhi court convicting a terrorist and awarding capital punishment in the case recently.

"The people of Bengal have not forgotten who you stood with after the Pulwama attack and criticised the Army. No one has forgotten how Mamata Didi

and a few other parties reacted when the Batla House encounter took place. These people stood with the terrorists at that time and raised questions on the encounter. A court recently convicted one of the terrorists and sentenced him to capital punishment," Modi said, while addressing a rally in Junglemahal's Purulia district.

Turning to the alleged extortion and cut money issues that have smeared the reputation of the ruling Trinamool Congress, Modi said, "The BJP believes in DBT, which stands for direct bank transfer, whereas Didi believes in TMC, which is transfer my commission. TMC's days are numbered in Bengal."

Referring to the foot injury Mamata sustained while on her campaign trail in Nandigram, the PM said, "Like millions of



The Trinamool has created a new breed of Maoists in Bengal who lost public money. The money is meant for poor people. Didi's government has patronised Maoist violence

Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

other women, for me, Didi is also a daughter of the nation. When she got injured, I was worried. I pray for her speedy recovery."

Referring to the *khela hobe* (there will be a game) one-liner

Mamata is making at every public rally, Modi said, "*Didi bole khela hobe, BJP bole chaakri hobe. Didi bole khela hobe, BJP bole shiksha hobe. Didi bole khela hobe, BJP bole vikas hobe. Khela sesh hobe, vikas aarambh hobe* (Didi says there will be a game. BJP says, there will be employment, education, and development. The game will over over and development will begin)."

Modi also accused Mamata of encouraging West Bengal's Maoists, who have waged war against the country, for her political gain. Castigating her for playing the politics of religion, Modi said, "After practicing politics of appeasement in Bengal, suddenly there seems to be a change in Didi. This is not transformation of the soul. This is fear of defeat." P9

Future tense as Delhi HC validates Singapore verdict in Amazon case

BISMAL MALIK @ Bengaluru

DEBT-riddled Future Group, led by its embattled founder Kishore Biyani, suffered a major setback after the Delhi High Court upheld an emergency arbitration (EA) award delivered by the Singapore International Arbitration Centre last year. The EA had put on hold a ₹24,713-crore deal between Reliance and Future Group.

Delivering the verdict on an appeal filed by e-commerce giant Amazon, a single judge bench of Justice J R Midha on Thursday issued a show-cause notice to Biyani and other FRL promoters, asking them why they shouldn't be detained in prison for violating the EA order. Ordering the attachment of their assets, the HC directed Biyani and others to furnish additional details of their assets.

Maintaining that the EA order was enforceable under Section 17(2) of the Indian Arbitra-



tion and Conciliation Act, Justice Midha criticised Biyani and other promoters for wilfully disobeying it. While directing Biyani to appear in person for the next hearing in April, the HC said that the Singapore's emergency arbitrator had rightly invoked the group of company doctrine and re-

strained Future Group from selling its assets to Reliance.

Biyani and FRL have been directed to stop further action in seeking regulatory approval to the RIL-FRL deal and bring on record all the actions taken for furtherance of the deal after the EA order was passed in October last.

The FRL had approached NCLAT to get the deal with RIL cleared in a bid to save its retail, warehousing and logistics businesses, reeling under a debt of ₹13,000 crore. Amazon, which owns a 49% stake in FRL's promoter entity Future Coupons, argued that Biyani had violated a contract, restraining the firm from entering into any shareholding arrangement with rival companies, including Reliance.

"The whole thrust of the respondents before this court is that the petitioner (Amazon) is a trillion-dollar company and ₹1,430 crore invested by them in the present case is peanuts for them and they should forget about this money as it is worth zero today - Delhi HC

EXPRESS READ

India beat England by 8 runs in 4th T20

AHMEDABAD: A determined India beat England by eight runs in the fourth T20 International to level the five-match series 2-2 here on Thursday. Invited to bat first, India scored 185 for 8 in the stipulated 20 overs, with Suryakumar Yadav (57) and Shreyas Yadav (37) doing the bulk of scoring at the Narendra Modi Stadium. Meanwhile, England were stopped at 177 for 8 | P15

Govt bats for All India Judicial Service

NEW DELHI: A "properly framed" All India Judicial Service (AIJS) on the lines of other all-India services such as IAS and IPS is important to strengthen the overall justice delivery system, Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad told Rajya Sabha on Thursday. The service will give an opportunity for induction of qualified legal talent, as well as address the issue of social inclusion.

WITH THIS ISSUE

CITY'S BEST WEEKEND GUIDE
INDULGE
32 PAGES, INCLUDING 16 OF INDULGE (TABLET)

Two lakh garment workers lost jobs, many others stare at loss of income

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

JUST when things had started looking up for garment workers, a possible second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic has brought back fears of income loss yet again. Garment workers, most of them women, were among the worst hit last year, as around two lakh of them lost their jobs, with garment units closing down and many laying off workers.

As per estimates, there are around 1,500 garment factories in the state, of which more than 900 are in Bengaluru. According to Labour Minister Shivaram Hebbar, in his reply to Tiptur MLA B C Nagesh in the Assembly, more than 2.85



lakh women were working in 983 garment units as of last year. Many of the units shut down and the total number of women workers has now dropped to less than one lakh. He also said that cases have been booked against 239 people (owners) for not providing minimum wages to women

employees. This apart, notices have been served to 396 garment units for not providing facilities to women employees as per rules.

Hebbar told *The New Indian Express* that the USA, the UAE and European countries are the major markets for the garment units in Karnataka, especially those in Bengaluru. "Ever since the pandemic hit, followed by a lockdown, they were not able to export garments. Also, they could not take up fresh orders as they did not have storage space. This has been a major issue. However, for the last couple of months, things are improving and they have started work," he said. P7



'TROUBLING HE FELT COMPELLED TO LEAVE'

"That someone of such integrity and eminence, who embodied the vision underlying Ashoka, felt compelled to leave is troubling," Arvind Subramanian said in his resignation letter to vice-chancellor Malabika Sarkar

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE faculty and students at Ashoka University issued strong statements in support of political commentator Pratap Bhanu Mehta, who resigned from the university two days ago citing infringement on academic freedom, and demanded that the institution ask him to join back.

A day after Mehta's exit, noted economist and former chief economic advisor Arvind Subramanian put in his papers, ruling that the institution, "even with its private status and pri-

vate capital, can no longer provide space for academic expression and freedom."

Mehta, who quit as the university's vice-chancellor two years ago, in an email to his students on Wednesday evening—a day after he resigned—had hinted that a discussion with the university regarding the "prevailing circumstances" led to his exit.

"The decision to leave Ashoka was not an easy one, especially because of the exceptional quality of students I have been privileged to teach," he wrote. "But after discussions

with the university about the prevailing circumstances, it became clear to me that it was best to move on. Hence, I took the decision to resign."

The faculty of the university, in a letter to the chancellor Malabika Sarkar on Thursday said, "It is not only an occasion for sorrow over the departure of a deeply respected and admired colleague, it also raises urgent questions about the university's commitment to academic freedom as well as the internal processes."

It is plausible that Mehta's resignation was a consequence of his role as a public intellectual and a government critic, the faculty said. P10

Top court should have bench in Bengaluru: MP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE BJP's Rajya Sabha MP from Karnataka, K C Ramamurthy, on Thursday pitched for setting up a bench of the Supreme Court in Bengaluru. The former cop-turned-MP, who raised the issue in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday,

reasoned that litigants were hesitant to approach the apex court owing to the distance, inability to afford transportation cost, and high fees of advocates. "There is a dire need for the SC to set up its appellate benches in four regions of the country. In the South, Bengaluru will be the ideal place," he said. P7

SC slaps high court on the wrist over rakhi-for-bail order

KANU SARDA @ New Delhi

TERMINING the Madhya Pradesh High Court order last year that had asked a man accused of sexual assault to have a *rakhi* tied by the victim to get bail, as a judicial stereotype, the Supreme Court on Thursday set it aside and issued a slew of guidelines on gender sensitivity in judicial approach.

A bench comprising Justices A M Khanwilkar and S Ravindra Bhatt said, "Judges play—

at all levels—a vital role as teachers and thought leaders. It is their role to be impartial in words and action, at all times. If they falter, especially in gender-related crimes, they imperil fairness and inflict great cruelty in the casual blindness to the despair of the survivors."

The judgment came on a plea filed by nine women lawyers who had challenged the high court's directive saying such bail orders have the effect of trivialising sexual offences.



"Using *rakhi* tying as a condition for bail, transforms a molester into a brother, by a judicial mandate," the judgment read. "This is wholly unacceptable,

able, and has the effect of diluting and eroding the offence of sexual harassment. The act perpetrated on the survivor constitutes an offence in law, and is not a minor transgression that can be remedied by way of an apology, rendering community service, tying a *rakhi* or presenting a gift to the survivor, or even promising to marry her, as the case may be," the 24-page judgment stated.

The bench, while issuing a set of directions to the trial courts

and high courts, also stressed the need to include gender sensitisation in the curriculum as well and training of judicial officers in National Judicial Academy on this subject.

The syllabi and content of such courses shall be framed after due consultation with domain experts, preferably within three months, the verdict said adding that the use of language and appropriate words and phrases should be emphasized as part of this training.